

East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition

January 2005

UPDATE

www.esjcoalition.org

What did the Coalition accomplish in 2004?

- The ESJWQC developed a monitoring and reporting plan for the Coalition region; submitted the plan on April 1, 2004, as required by the waiver.
- Initiated water sampling in July 2004 at four sites in the Coalition region.
- Sampled monthly through September; two storm events in winter 2004-05.

How many have joined the Coalition?

1680 landowner/operators with 732,389 acres of irrigated land have signed up for the Coalition as of December 15, 2004.

Who is performing monitoring and analysis?

The Coalition Board of Directors advertised a Request for Proposals for performing monitoring and reporting that is required by the waiver. The firm selected was Pacific EcoRisk, Martinez, CA. Managing the monitoring program is Dr. Michael Johnson, who is a water quality consultant and also a scientist with U.C Davis.

How are membership dues being spent?

2004 membership dues will cover the Coalition's operating costs through winter 2004-05 with less than \$10,000 carryover. Operating costs include:

- water sampling and analysis,
- preparation of Regional Water Board reports,
- membership data base management,
- new member solicitations.

Activities were performed on contract with private firms or consultants with oversight by the volunteer Board of Directors and Executive Director.

How much are membership dues in 2005?

The Coalition is required to expand its number of monitoring sites to 12 in 2005. Adding these sites and the analysis will more than double the operating costs for remaining in compliance with the waiver. To cover increased costs, membership dues in 2005 will be \$50 per landowner plus \$1 an acre for all irrigated lands.

Members will be mailed renewal invoices in January 2005.

Is there a penalty for those who sign-up in '05?

Landowners or operators who join the Coalition after February 1, 2005 will be asked to pay the new dues plus \$100 to cover 2004 costs. The Board believes it is equitable for new members to share in the cost of establishing the Coalition with those who joined in the first year.

What work has the Coalition completed?

- Formed Board of Directors; hold Technical Committee meetings (open membership).
- Filed a notice of intent and general report with the Regional Board on October 30, 2003, documents required to fulfill the new regulations for watershed coalitions. The Regional Board responded with a "Notice of Applicability" approval.
- Held numerous meetings in the region to inform growers of the new regulations.
- Completed the conditional waiver monitoring plan due April 1, 2004.

Who is managing the Coalition?

A Board of Directors has been established to manage Coalition affairs. The Board Chairman is Parry Klassen, a fruit grower and also Executive Director of the Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship (CURES). Board members include:

- Richard Gemperle, Gemperle Enterprises;
 - Kent Johnson, Ag Production Co.;
 - Bill McKinney, almond grower
 - Bruce Pace, A.L. Gilbert Co.;
 - Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo, Merced County Farm Bureau;
 - Alan Reynolds, Gallo Vineyards, Inc.;
 - Wayne Zipser, Stanislaus Co. Farm Bureau;
- Ex-officio
- Dennis Gudgel, Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner;
 - David Robinson, Merced County Agricultural Commissioner.

What are the Coalition's goals?

- To operate an efficient, economical program that enables members to be in compliance with the Irrigated Lands Waiver.
- File required reports with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) to maintain conditional waiver coverage for Coalition members.
- Implement an economical and scientifically valid water monitoring program for area rivers and agricultural drains (as required by the waiver).
- Spread costs equitably among farm land owners/operators who are Coalition members.
- Communicate to landowners where water monitoring indicates problems and work to solve those problems.

Coalition Cooperating Entities

Cooperating entities are those local groups and organizations who are committed to assisting the Coalition in reaching its goals. To date, the following entities have signed on to the Coalition:

- Calaveras County Agricultural Commissioner
- Chowchilla Irrigation District
- Coalition for Urban/Rural Environmental Stewardship
- Ducks Unlimited
- East Merced Resource Conservation District
- East Stanislaus Resource Conservation District
- Madera County Farm Bureau
- Madera County Agricultural Commissioner
- Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner
- Mariposa County Farm Bureau
- Merced County Agricultural Commissioner
- Merced County Farm Bureau
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Madera
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Merced
- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Stanislaus
- Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner
- Stanislaus County Department of Environmental Resources
- Stanislaus County Farm Bureau
- Tuolumne County Agricultural Commissioner
- Tuolumne County Farm Bureau
- More than 1900 area growers

Who is responsible for making the Coalition successful?

The individual members of the Coalition. Failure of the Coalition to meet deadlines, implement the proper monitoring programs or work to correct water quality problems would mean that individual land owners would be responsible for fulfilling those requirements. While Stanislaus County Farm Bureau and CURES representatives signed the notice of intent for the Coalition, it is the Coalition participants who are ultimately responsible for participating in Coalition activities, paying their fair share of all costs to carry out the conditional waiver program and participating in efforts to solve problems identified through water monitoring.

For information on the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition, contact:

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***See the Coalition website at
www.esjcoalition.org***